



DESIGN & MAKE

BY HEATHER LUKE

Marianne: Quilted frilled cushion

Marianne: quilted cushion



Marianne has to be one of our prettiest cushions yet, frilled but in a quiet and calm way. The frill is quite deep and single with a handstitched edge. This edge needs to look as good on the back as it does on the front so it will take time to do well - but then most things that are worth doing do take time. As the old adage goes - if it's worth doing at all it's worth doing well. When everything we make looks good from every direction, the pride and pleasure is so much greater. On the back we've made lovely long stitched ties that put this particular cushion very definitely in the bedroom, dressing room and boudoir camp.

The fabric should be one that responds well to quilting - a little puffiness is good, as is a subtle sheen - and of course plain colours are given a whole new life, so work particularly well. We used silk dupion and this is always a good one for small furnishings - it's light, easily available and comes in many beautiful colours, from the softest and most subtle to the brightest and most intense. Similarly, the embroidering threads can be tonal or contrasting, to create whatever look you want.

With our white we've used a fairly subtle coffee coloured perle thread for the knots and cross stitches but we could have chosen anything at all - a pale grey similar to the bed cover beneath, dusty pink... shoreline blue ... White on white would have been equally stunning.

It's perhaps worth noting that even with quilting padding between, a dark thread beneath might still create a shadow line, so whichever colour combination you go for just bear this in mind. A light thread into a dark one won't matter - but maybe closely toned colours look the most sophisticated in any case.



*Brick walls, striped linen drapes soft linen bedding - add
quilted silk . It's all about colour and materials*



Marianne with Agathe



Beautifully worked hand stitching is a pleasure to do when we give ourselves to it- taking the moment.....





Make: *Marianne*

MATERIALS

For this cushion:

Inner

Feather / down pad 40 cm x 40 cm 16" x 16"

Cover

Fabric: silk dupion

Front 45 cm x 45 cm 18" x 18"

Back 45 cm x 45 cm 18" x 18"

Frill 320 cm x 15 cm 108" x 6"

Ties: 4 no. 60 cm x 1 cm (24" x 3/8") 60 cm x 16cm 24" x 6"

Facings: 2 no. 45 cm x 8 cm (18" x 3" 45 cm x 16 cm 18" x 6"

Interliner: quilting wadding

or batting - lightweight wool

or 2 oz. polyester. 45 cm x 45 cm 18" - 18"

Backing: muslin 45 cm x 45 cm 18" - 18"

Threads: we used perle thread no. 6 in coffee

Stitching template: paper, pencil and ruler

PREPARE

1. Cut out all fabrics. Mark the tops and right sides. Press to remove all creases, leave them flat on the table.

TO MAKE THE TIES

1. If you prefer to make proper, pulled through rouleaux then by all means do. These are made flat as we thought we'd embroider along the lengths of these as well. We didn't but you could

2. Take the piece set aside for the ties and press in half lengthwise. Use hot iron and a firm hand - you want the crease to be sharp. Open it out and press the raw edges to the middle. Cut along the fold lines to make the 4 ties- it's easier to cut into the fold rather than to open the fabric out.

3. Place one of these pieces right side down. Press one short end over by about 8mm (1/4 - 3/8"). Press the piece in half lengthwise, then the two sides into the middle, as before. Now fold one side over the other- the folded edges should be closely aligned, so as you pin the edges together, just finger roll them a bit to make them match if necessary and pin specifically to hold. At the folded short end just trim the corners back a few mm - (1/8") to ease the bulk. Stitch across the short end and along the length.

Tip! Leave the threads long at the start and don't back stitch - it's tricky to get right, and looks better without, so once the length has been stitched, thread these ends onto a sewing needle, one at a time, make a very neat knot then take them through the work and out, trim the ends.

Tip! If you're struggling with machining the end, leave it and start stitching just past it. Leave the machine threads long then go back and neatly hand sew the corner and end. If you've made a bodge of it, either cut it off and re-do it, knot it, find a lovely bead to thread over it, or make a snail end.....

TO MAKE THE FRILL

1. To make the hem, place the frill length along the table right side down, bottom towards you. Press 2 cm (3/4") to the wrong side. Fold the raw edge under, so that it's tucked right back into the fold, press and pin to hold. Leave the last 5-6 cms (2 - 2 1/2") at each end.

Tip! If this raw edge isn't right into the fold and is even slightly raggedy it will show any time the sunlight is close and you'll wish you'd spent a few more minutes on it.

You should now have a lovely even 1 cm (3/8") hem.

2. Join the short ends with the smallest French seam you can make. Complete the frill hem.

3. Make the hand stitches - we did a cross stitch on the front that was almost exactly a third of the hem depth and then the threads at the back turned into a tram-line style running stitch.

Tip! There is no hard and fast rule for this, as everyone works differently, with different tensions. It just needs to look pleasing. Even within our workroom each person would produce a slightly different size of stitch and back to front view. As always, experiment with a spare piece of fabric to find out what works best for you, and if this stitch design is too difficult for you right now, there is nothing at all wrong with two lovely rows of running stitches ...

4. With the stitches done, press the frill and divide it into 8 - fold it in half and then in half again. Mark with coloured tacks or snip notches.

5. Run a gathering thread around, along the seamline. Leave to one side.

THE CUSHION BACK AND FACINGS

1. Cut the facing piece in half to make two piece 45 cms (18") long. Press 1.5 cm (5/8") to the wrong side on one long side and both short sides of each piece. Stitch around, close to the fold and press.

2. Place the cushion back piece onto the worktable right side up and with the bottom nearest you. Pin two of the ties onto the seam line at approx. 1/3 intervals. For this project, 15 cms (6") from each side. Pin them securely at the edges and then approx 10 cms (4") further back, fold up the ends and secure these as well - they too often get caught up in stitching - yes, even for us. Stitch them down, keeping within the seamline.

3. Place one of the facing pieces over, right side down, raw edges aligned and finishing 1.5 cms (5/8") from each side. Pin, then stitch along the seam line. Press the facing seam open from the front, press it to the back and pin it to hold. Pin each end of the facing back over itself to keep it away from the side seam, and out to the way for the next stitching.

TO QUILT THE FRONT

1. Lay the silk onto the worktable to mark it up.

* The method below is given because it's adaptable, it works for any size of cushion – you might prefer to make a paper template first, or to adjust the amount of knots.

We use small pencil dots to make the marks as they will be fully covered by the stitches. However if you prefer to make tacks or use transfer paper that's also fine.

2.1 Trace tack all around at 1.5 cms (5/8") from the raw edges to mark the seam allowance. (this isn't necessary for the making it just helps to avoid potential spot marking error)

2.2 Place the ruler over the fabric diagonally, so that it runs through the centre of the corners. Score a line along it and trace tack. Do the same from the other corner. Mark the centre.

2.3 With the ruler back on the cushion, measure the distance from the centre to the seam allowance at the corner. Divide this by 5 and mark each of the four divisions with a small pencil dot (not including the seam allowance corner). Repeat for the other diagonal.

2.4 Whatever the distance is between each of the markers cut a card template to that width x 55- 60 cm (22- 24") in length. Make marks all along one side, equal to this dimension.

2.5 Lie the unmarked side of this marker along one of the diagonals, aligning the mark closest to the centre to the first pencil mark on the other diagonal.

2.6 Wherever there is a mark on the card make a dot on the cushion front. Pick the card up and align it with the next, or opposite, diagonal and carry on doing this until you get close to the corner. You'll see a grid emerging as the cushion front becomes covered with beautifully aligned dots.

2.7 If you want to see dots very close to the edge or into the corners it might be best to make them later, after the cushion has been finished, when the risk of them being caught up in pins or stitching has passed.

3. Place the muslin onto the worktable and press to remove any creases. Lay the wadding (batting) on top, and the silk on top of this. Pin all the way around. Hold the pieces together by tacking- replace the pins with tacking lines stitched across the middle lengthwise and then 3-4 times across the cushion - avoiding the pencilled spots.

4. Stitch a French knot- or a cross stitch - over each pencilled spot, working each one individually, tying off thread in a knot or double stitch into the muslin directly behind each stitch.

MAKE THE FRONT

1. Place the cushion front back onto the worktable and press around the edges with the toe of the iron - to flatten the wadding (batting) within the seam allowance only. Trim the wadding (batting) away close against the seam if it refuses to flatten.

2. Mark the centres of each side with small notches. At each corner make a marking tack - where the two seam stitching lines will meet.

3. Gather the frill up to approx. 160 - 170 cms (60" - 64")

4. Open up the frill and with right sides together pin one of each of the 8 markers to one half side notch and one corner. We'd place the seam either at the centre bottom or into a bottom corner.
 5. Working with one section at a time, ease the frills to fit - finger pleat them neatly and pin them, first half way along, then half way between, and so on, until the whole section is neatly gathered and pinned.
- Tip!* You'll need to have lots of pins- the best result comes when there are enough pins that they have practically made you a road... if you've got limited stock, then do one section at a time.
6. Do the same with the second half of the same side. Then pin in the opposite side.
 7. At this point, stitch the two opposite sides in place. Start exactly on the corner tack and stop exactly on the one at the other end. Back stitch to secure these stitches at each end.
 8. Work the other two sides in the same way until all gathering is pinned away tidily. Look at the corners and fold and pin the stitched frills back out of the way, so that the corner is clear to stitch. Start exactly on the corner tack and from where the last stitching finished and stop exactly on the one at the other end- right against the last stitching. Back stitch to secure these stitches at each end. Stitch around each corner again if you need to.
 9. Take out all pins and tacking threads. Look at the work to make sure there aren't any caught pieces, and re-do anything that isn't as you would like it to be.
 10. Having established that it's all neat and well stitched, place it back on the worktable with the frill pinned down, and the bottom towards you.

TO MAKE THE CUSHION

1. Pin the other two ties to the bottom front edge, add the facings, then pin, press and stitch as you did for the back.
2. Place the back over the front, and pin the three sides together - first pin the four corners, then in between and in between again. *You will need to stitch the seams from the front, so pin them in so that the work can be turned over.
3. Stitch the front to the back, working from the front so that you can follow the frill stitching line. Stitch just to the cushion side of it. At the bottom corners pin them so that the facing seam lines are aligned with each other, then stitch each corner to exactly where the facings start, so no little gaps. Secure the stitches.
4. Take out the pins, open it out and look at it, re-do any errors, or mis-stitching.
5. Neaten the seam, press, trim the corners if necessary. Hand sew the short ends of the facings together.
6. Turn the cushion out and press lightly on the front. Unpin the cushion frills and the ties, pull the frills with short sharp tugs to free them, press lightly, fill with the pad. Fold the facings to one side of the pad and tie the ties.
7. Enjoy your beautiful cushion !



An interior designers guide to home furnishings large and small, essential and ancillary, fun and serious. It's good to contribute to our own home furnishings however little time or expertise we have, and small projects like this are not so complicated when you're taken through them carefully, step by step. The effect far outweighs the effort. Choosing good materials in good colours is always the starting place - the better the fabric, the more character it has, and life of it's own, the less work that needs to be done....

Project Ref: Marianne: Quilted frilled cushion.

We can just see *Agathe* peeping into the top corner

All rights reserved. Please make copies only for personal and educational use, and then always in entirety and with full credit. Thank you.